

# 6

張 奇 壽 經 國 撰 著

## The Safety Valve in Handling Complaints

MOST PEOPLE TRYING TO WIN OTHERS TO THEIR WAY OF THINKING do too much talking themselves. Let the other people talk themselves out. They know more about their business and problems than you do. So ask them questions. Let them tell you a few things.

If you disagree with them you may be tempted to interrupt. But don't. It is dangerous. They won't pay attention to you while they still have a lot of ideas of their own crying for expression. So listen patiently and with an open mind. Be sincere about it. Encourage them to express their ideas fully.

Does this policy pay in business? Let's see. Here is the story of a sales representative who was *forced* to try it.

One of the largest automobile manufacturers in the United States was negotiating for a year's requirements of upholstery fabrics. Three important manufacturers had worked up fabrics in sample bodies. These had all been inspected by the executives of the motor company, and notice had been sent to each manufacturer saying that, on a certain day, a representative from each supplier would be given an opportunity to make a final plea for the contract.

## *How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking*

G.B.R., a representative of one manufacturer, arrived in town with a severe attack of laryngitis. "When it came my turn to meet the executives in conference," Mr. R—— said as he related the story before one of my classes, "I had lost my voice. I could hardly whisper. I was ushered into a room and found myself face to face with the textile engineer, the purchasing agent, the director of sales and the president of the company. I stood up and made a valiant effort to speak, but I couldn't do anything more than squeak.

"They were all seated around a table, so I wrote on a pad of paper: 'Gentlemen, I have lost my voice. I am speechless.'

"I'll do the talking for you,' the president said. He did. He exhibited my samples and praised their good points. A lively discussion arose about the merits of my goods. And the president, since he was talking for me, took the position I would have had during the discussion. My sole participation consisted of smiles, nods and a few gestures.

"As a result of this unique conference, I was awarded the contract, which called for over half a million yards of upholstery fabrics at an aggregate value of \$1,600,000—the biggest order I had ever received.

"I know I would have lost the contract if I hadn't lost my voice, because I had the wrong idea about the whole proposition. I discovered, quite by accident, how richly it sometimes pays to let the other person do the talking."

Letting the other person do the talking helps in family situations as well as in business. Barbara Wilson's relationship with her daughter, Laurie, was deteriorating rapidly. Laurie, who had been a quiet, complacent child, had grown into an uncooperative, sometimes belligerent teenager. Mrs. Wilson lectured her, threatened her and punished her, but all to no avail.

"One day," Mrs. Wilson told one of our classes, "I just gave up. Laurie had disobeyed me and had left the house to visit her girl friend before she had completed her chores. When she returned I was about to scream at her for the ten-thousandth time,

but I just didn't have the strength to do it. I just looked at her and said sadly, 'Why, Laurie, why?'

"Laurie noted my condition and in a calm voice asked, 'Do you really want to know?' I nodded and Laurie told me, first hesitantly, and then it all flowed out. I had never listened to her. I was always telling her to do this or that. When she wanted to tell me her thoughts, feelings, ideas, I interrupted with more orders. I began to realize that she needed me—not as a bossy mother, but as a confidante, an outlet for all her confusion about growing up. And all I had been doing was talking when I should have been listening. I never heard her.

"From that time on I let her do all the talking she wanted. She tells me what is on her mind, and our relationship has improved immeasurably. She is again a cooperative person."

A large advertisement appeared on the financial page of a New York newspaper calling for a person with unusual ability and experience. Charles T. Cubellis answered the advertisement, sending his reply to a box number. A few days later, he was invited by letter to call for an interview. Before he called, he spent hours in Wall Street finding out everything possible about the person who had founded the business. During the interview, he remarked: "I should be mighty proud to be associated with an organization with a record like yours. I understand you started twenty-eight years ago with nothing but desk room and one stenographer. Is that true?"

Almost every successful person likes to reminisce about his early struggles. This man was no exception. He talked for a long time about how he had started with \$450 in cash and an original idea. He told how he had fought against discouragement and battled against ridicule, working Sundays and holidays, twelve to sixteen hours a day; how he had finally won against all odds until now the most important executives on Wall Street were coming to him for information and guidance. He was proud of such a record. He had a right to be, and he had a splendid time telling about it. Finally, he questioned Mr. Cubellis briefly about his experi-

## *How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking*

ence, then called in one of his vice presidents and said: "I think this is the person we are looking for."

Mr. Cubellis had taken the trouble to find out about the accomplishments of his prospective employer. He showed an interest in the other person and his problems. He encouraged the other person to do most of the talking—and made a favorable impression.

Roy G. Bradley of Sacramento, California, had the opposite problem. He listened as a good prospect for a sales position talked himself into a job with Bradley's firm. Roy reported:

"Being a small brokerage firm, we had no fringe benefits, such as hospitalization, medical insurance and pensions. Every representative is an independent agent. We don't even provide leads for prospects, as we cannot advertise for them as our larger competitors do.

"Richard Pryor had the type of experience we wanted for this position, and he was interviewed first by my assistant, who told him about all the negatives related to this job. He seemed slightly discouraged when he came into my office. I mentioned the one benefit of being associated with my firm, that of being an independent contractor and therefore virtually being self-employed.

"As he talked about these advantages to me, he talked himself out of each negative thought he had when he came in for the interview. Several times it seemed as though he was half talking to himself as he was thinking through each thought. At times I was tempted to add to his thoughts; however, as the interview came to a close I felt he had convinced himself, very much on his own, that he would like to work for my firm.

"Because I had been a good listener and let Dick do most of the talking, he was able to weigh both sides fairly in his mind, and he came to the positive conclusion, which was a challenge he created for himself. We hired him and he has been an outstanding representative for our firm."

Even our friends would much rather talk to us about their achievements than listen to us boast about ours.

La Rochefoucauld, the French philosopher, said: "If you want

## HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

enemies, excel your friends; but if you want friends, let your friends excel you."

Why is that true? Because when our friends excel us, they feel important; but when we excel them, they—or at least some of them—will feel inferior and envious.

By far the best-liked placement counselor in the Midtown Personnel Agency in New York City was Henrietta G——. It hadn't always been that way. During the first few months of her association with the agency, Henrietta didn't have a single friend among her colleagues. Why? Because every day she would brag about the placements she had made, the new accounts she had opened, and anything else she had accomplished.

"I was good at my work and proud of it," Henrietta told one of our classes. "But instead of my colleagues sharing my triumphs, they seemed to resent them. I wanted to be liked by these people. I really wanted them to be my friends. After listening to some of the suggestions made in this course, I started to talk about myself less and listen more to my associates. They also had things to boast about and were more excited about telling me about their accomplishments than about listening to my boasting. Now, when we have some time to chat, I ask them to share their joys with me, and I only mention my achievements when they ask."

---

### PRINCIPLE 6

Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.

---